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C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 002328

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TAGS: PREL PTER PGOV PK

SUBJECT: WALI KHAN'S STRATEGY FOR CONTAINING MILITANCY

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson, for reasons 1.4 (b)(d)

¶1. (C) Summary. Awami National Party (ANP) leader Asfandyar Wali Khan told Ambassador July 7 that security in Peshawar was under control. He questioned the seriousness of the recent Khyber operation in Bara, but said that if the Pakistani security forces can continue to push the militants into the mountains and control the silk road, the ANP can clean up Khyber and control Swat "within two months." Khan reiterated his opposition to the South Waziristan accord as originally drafted, defended the Swat accord, and repeated his support for using bribes and inter-tribal rivalries to keep the peace. He recommended that the GOP confiscate land from Siraj Haqqani, who controls Baitullah Mehsud. Khan urged Musharraf to sign an executive order allowing the political parties to operate in the tribal areas, said the names of Pakistan's mini-jirga participants should be announced soon, and reported that the ANP would be forming lashkars (militias) to help keep the peace. Khan admitted there were strains in his relationship with Pakistan People's Party leader Asif Zardari over the GOP's policy towards the militants. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Ambassador and Polcouns met July 7 with Awami National Party (ANP) leader Asfandyar Wali Khan in Islamabad. Wali Khan appeared tired and worn out after the death of his brother and the ensuing days of condolence calls.

¶3. (C) Khan said the situation around Peshawar was under control but questioned the seriousness of the recent Frontier Corps (FC) action in Khyber Agency, saying that the XI Corps Commander had admitted that no real militants had been arrested and no significant arms had been seized. Khan claimed that the house that had been destroyed did not even belong to criminal warlord Mangal Bagh. Why, Khan asked, did the FC go after Bagh? Bagh was a "reformist" who opposed the Taliban and was at odds with Nam Dar, a militant leader who supported the Taliban. This action will make Dar and his ally Baitullah Mehsud stronger at Bagh's expense, said Khan, and Dar will continue transferring foreign fighters fleeing Swat into Bara, Khyber. Most locals believed, said Khan, that the operation was an "eyewash" to pacify visiting South and Central Asia Assistant Secretary Boucher. Khan offered to share with post a list of houses in Bara where foreign fighters were hiding.

ANP-PPP Relations

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¶4. (C) Khan expressed frustration -- which he said he had shared with Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Asif Zardari -- that "people (i.e., Interior Minister Rehman Malik) who did not know the difference between the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) were making decisions about military action." NWFP Governor Ghani, said Khan, understood that proposals by Malik to move military forces into the rugged Tirah Valley

were not feasible. "Malik does not even know the geography," claimed Khan.

¶15. (C) Khan admitted he had had several "spats" with Zardari over coalition policy for the border areas. "If I cannot contribute, I will resign," said Khan. But he denied that the ANP had not coordinated with the government on the Swat accord by insisting that a PPP provincial minister was a signatory to the deal. When Nawaz Sharif came to pay a condolence call, Khan said he told him "the judges are not my problem, survival is."

#### ANP-ISI Relations

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¶16. (C) Khan reported that he had met with both Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Chief LtGen Nadeem Taj and ISI Directorate C Chief MG Nusrat Naeem. They had confronted Khan because he did not support the proposed South Wazisistan accord. Yes, Khan said, he opposed the accord because he insisted that it include provisions prohibiting the use of land or people in attacks into Afghanistan, and the list of prisoners to be exchanged should have been publicized in advance. They also complained that the ANP did not take ISI into confidence before signing the Swat accord. Khan admitted that he should have had the Swat accord translated into English and distributed it more widely.

¶17. (C) ISI, said Khan was trying to reverse course. When Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Kayani was ISI chief, he adopted a more vigorous policy of combating the militants, and this convinced the militants to start attacking Pakistan rather than ISAF troops in Afghanistan. Now, ISI is trying to make peace for Pakistan at the expense of events in Afghanistan. Without coordination among the various government entities, however, Khan predicted the shift would be counterproductive.

#### Solutions

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¶18. (C) Khan outlined several strategies for combating terrorists and controlling the border:

(a) Amend the Political Parties Act to allow parties to operate in FATA. If the Prime Minister could do this, said Khan, the changes would already have been made, but it requires an executive order signed by President Musharraf.

(b) Re-instigate the pre-Soviet invasion practice of having both the GOA and the GOP paying off the maliks in the tribal regions to keep the peace. "I am a Pashtun and it is embarrassing to admit this, but we Pashtuns take money in exchange for behavior." The practice died out when outside forces pumped millions into the mujahadeen movement, but Khan believed it was time to reconstitute what was a "cheap" solution to enforce peace in the tribal area. Khan said he had discussed the idea with President Karzai, who had agreed it was a good initiative.

(c) The ANP, reported Khan, was re-forming Peace and Defense Committees (which traditionally keep the peace during party meetings) not just for the NWFP but for FATA. These lashkars (militias) from the Afridi tribe could clean out the militants in Khyber "within two months" if other forces (Army, Frontier Corps, Frontier Constabulary) keep the momentum up and sweep criminals and militants into the mountains beyond Bara. Khan said he might ask the U.S. for some logistical help in this effort. He also pleaded for arms and equipment for the Frontier Constabulary.

(d) Khan said he told Kayani, "control the silk route (through the mountains), and the ANP will control Swat." Khan assessed the current situation in Swat as fluid but noted that the U.S. should recognize there are two groups in Swat -- the militants led by Maulana Fazlullah in lower Swat, and the tribes that oppose him in upper Swat. Fazlullah owes his allegiance to Baitullah Mehsud, but Mehsud is "an idiot,

a pawn" who takes orders from Siraj Haqqani. Khan evaded the Ambassador's question of why the GOP had not arrested Siraj since they know where he is and responded, "Siraj has millions of dollars worth of real estate in Miranshah and Mirali -- why doesn't the GOP confiscate his lands?" Hekmatyar remains loyal to his base support in Jaish Mohammad and Lashkar-e-Taiyba (LET), said Khan. "Who created Jaish and LET? ISI did, so they should be able to control Hekmatyar," asserted Khan. He noted that both Baitullah Mehsud's brother and Hekmatyar's son managed to pay condolence calls on him in Chardsaddah and return home without being arrested--"what does this tell you?" asked Khan.

(e) Reach out to reconcilables. Khan described how the ANP was using Sufi Mohammed to build support against jihad; since Sufi's release he has publicly condemned violence openly and opposed cross border attacks into Afghanistan. Sufi has even called his daughter (who is married to Maulana Fazlullah) back, said Khan. "If Sufi is willing to apologize publicly, why kill him?" At the same time, Khan asked that the ANP stop being criticized for bringing Sharia to Swat--"all we have done is bring back the law that was predominant in the area when Benazir Bhutto was Prime Minister."

(f) Finalize the jirga participant list and schedule the mini-jirga with Afghanistan as soon as possible. Khan said he was reviewing the GOP's draft list and hoped it would be finalized soon. He indicated there was ongoing debate about who would lead the Pakistani side. "MOI Malik would be a disaster; it has to be a Pashtun, and any elder would do." He said he needed to remain free to work the jirga from behind the scenes.

(g) Exploit inter-tribal differences--"use Commander Nazir to counter Baitullah Mehsud." Ambassador pushed back, saying that Nazir was running operations into Afghanistan with ISI knowledge. In response, Khan said "you have to control the imam who is leading the prayers, and then you can control the followers." Khan reported that there were foreign fighters in Wana -- approximately 600 of them. "We need to wean the tribals away from the militants; although 80% of Pashtuns have an AK-47, that isn't enough," said Khan, to go up against these militants. ISI, he said, gave us 17,000 AK-47s, but it is not enough.

¶9. (C) Comment: Khan's complex plan of engaging some tribals and setting others against each other is one that the GOP does not appear capable of implementing effectively. There are still too many disconnects between the provincial and national levels, and the ANP is having trouble educating its coalition partners on the nuances of tribal politics. Until the ANP can define a sellable strategy to Zardari, these disconnects are likely to continue--to the militants' advantage.

PATTERSON